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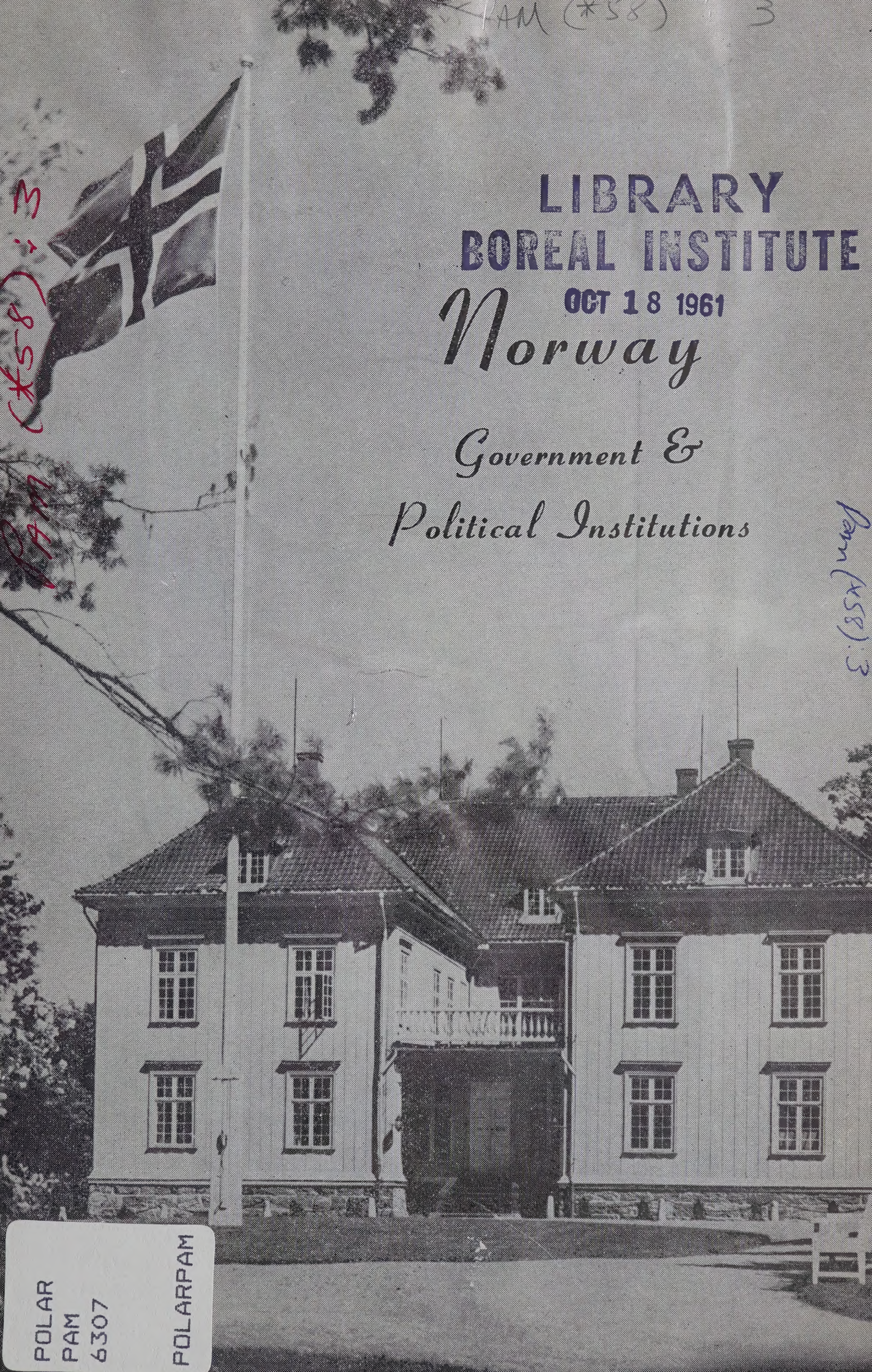

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Cover picture shows the Eidsvold Mansion, north of Oslo, where the Norwegian Constitution was signed on May 17, 1814.

The Fundamental Law

The history of Norway as a political entity dates back to the latter part of the 9th century, when King Harald Fairhair succeeded in consolidating a major part of the country through conquest and persuasion. During his rule, the three regional *Lagthing,* quasi-democratic legislative assemblies, became the most important instruments of royal power. A fourth *Lagthing* was formed during the rule of King Olav the Holy (995-1030). Nearly three centuries later, in 1270, King Magnus Lagaböter—the Law Mender—established a common body of law for the whole country, greatly increasing the judicial authority of royal officials.

Despite the increasing monarchial domination, the regional *Lagthing* retained their power to legislate and pass final sentence in criminal cases as well as in civil law suits. The democratic principles of legislation and judicial proceedings were maintained. One of the ancient statutes laid down these rules: "No one shall lay hands on another in his home, neither the King nor anyone else. If, nevertheless, the King does so, the summons shall pass through all the land and men shall advance against him and strike him. If he eludes them, he shall never be allowed to return to the land."

Toward the end of the 14th century, Norway and Denmark became united under one sovereign. During the next four centuries, Norway was ruled by Danish officials and Denmark became the dominant partner, with the King residing in Copenhagen. Throughout this period, however, the hope of achieving freedom, independence and self-government was kept alive in Norway. In the early part of the 19th century, Norway became Denmark's reluctant partner on the French side in the Napoleonic wars, with Sweden on the opposite side. As hostilities came to an end, Denmark was forced, by the Kiel Treaty of Jan. 14, 1814, to cede Norway to Sweden, without Norway's consent. The Danish royal governor in Norway, Prince Christian Frederik, hurriedly called a Constitutional Assembly, composed of 59 government officials, 37 wealthy farmers, and 16 businessmen, altogether 112 delegates, in the hope of proclaiming Norway an independent Kingdom, with himself as King. Meeting April 10, the Constitutional Assembly drafted and, on May 17, 1814, adopted the Constitution of Norway. When the Assembly unanimously elected Prince Christian Frederik to be the new King of Norway, Sweden reacted by launching a military attack. After brief hostilities, a truce was signed. Under the Moss Convention, Norway became united with Sweden as a separate kingdom under one monarch. At the same time, the King of Sweden agreed to recognize Norway's free constitution. The union lasted until 1905, when it was peacefully dissolved on the initiative of the Norwegian Parliament.

Twenty years after the Constitution of 1814 was adopted, at a time when the tide of reaction was sweeping away all liberal constitutions on the European continent, a noted British politician offered the following observations on Norway's freedom charter: "All the essential parts of liberty were already in the country. The property was in the hands of the whole people. The ancient laws and institutions affecting property were in full operation, and they were conceived in the very spirit of liberty. There was nothing in the condition of the people, the state of property, the civil or religious establishments, which did not fit in with a free constitution. The new constitution was but a super-structure of a building of which the foundations had been laid and the lower walls constructed, eight centuries before, by the ancestors of the present generation."

In drafting the Fundamental Law, the men who met at Eidsvold were influenced by British political tradition, as well as by the principles of the U. S. Declaration of Independence and the ideas of the French Revolution. The original articles rest on two basic principles: national independence and sovereignty of the people. In its formal structure the constitution embodies the ideas of a division of power. Thus, it outlines "the three powers of the State" as the "Executive Power" (the King in Council); the "Legislative Power" (Parliament); and the "Judicial Power" (the Courts of Law). In the course of years, however, the relationship between the three high powers has become that of a ramification, rather than a division of power. In practice, the Government (the King in Council), Parliament and the Courts carry out the specific functions assigned to each under the Constitution. They are trustees of separate parts of the popular sovereignty.

This is made clear in the first and the last articles. The first states that "The Kingdom of Norway is a free, independent and indivisible realm." Thus, neither King nor Parliament is empowered to surrender the independence of the country, or to cede any part of it. The last article, prescribing the procedure for amending the Constitution, makes certain that no change can be made until Parliament and the electorate have had ample opportunity to study and discuss the proposed alteration.

Civil rights are laid down in a number of specific rules, each with a definite legal bearing. Thus, if the Courts, in trying a case, should find that the constitutional rights of a citizen have been infringed by a law enacted by Parliament, they are bound to declare the law inapplicable. Three important provisions specify that (1) no person can be imprisoned without trial; (2) freedom of speech, publication and assembly is to be protected; and (3) no law may be given retroactive effect.

In these rules one may trace the political line from the American and French declarations of the inalienable human rights. In the Constitution of 1814, however, the ideas of freedom and democracy have found a national form, in keeping with Norwegian traditions.

The Constitutional Assembly at Eidsvold

Two-thirds of the original articles have, in the course of years, been amended. In 1869, articles 68 and 80 were altered so as to provide that the Parliament (Storting) was to meet every year, instead of every third, and that the sessions should last as long as the Members of Parliament deemed it necessary. In 1884, the Parliamentary system of government, by which the King is bound to appoint a Government that has the confidence of the Parliament, was introduced in Norway. However, the words of the Constitution — that the King himself is to choose his Council — have not been altered.

The most important change since 1884 is extension of the franchise to all men and women above 21 years of age. In 1898, the limited franchise was replaced by universal suffrage for all men. Women received the right to vote in 1907 — first with certain limitations, but finally in 1913, on the same basis as men. The controversial "Peasant Clause," that allotted 100 of the 150 seats in Parliament to rural areas and 50 to urban election districts, was repealed in 1952, reflecting the increasing urbanization of the country.

King and Government

The executive power is vested in the King. As a constitutional monarch, however, the King exercises his powers in concert with a Council of State or Cabinet, composed of a Prime Minister and the heads of the various government departments, who are called Ministers. Under the Constitution, the King must reside in Norway. With consent of the Parliament he may, however, reign from abroad, as he did during World War II.

Cabinet members must be at least 30 years of age, and more than half must belong to the State Church. The first woman to become a member of the Cabinet was appointed in 1946, although for many years the only requirement had been Norwegian citizenship, regardless of sex. Every member of the Cabinet, except the Prime Minister, normally heads a government department or Ministry. During certain periods, including the first few years after World War II, ministers without portfolio have been appointed as consultant cabinet members to handle special tasks, participating in Cabinet meetings on the same basis as the regular members.

When the Constitution speaks of the prerogatives of the King and the duties of the King in Council, it means in fact, *the prerogatives and the duties of the Cabinet.* Today, it may be said that the King of Norway reigns but does not govern. That power is actually exercised by the Cabinet.

Among the King's duties and prerogatives, the most important are: (1) to direct and supervise all affairs pertaining to the State Church and the educational system; (2) to issue and repeal regulations concerning commerce, customs, trade, industry and police; (3) to collect taxes and duties imposed by the Parliament; (4) to supervise the management of all property and regalia belonging to the State; (5) to pardon criminals; (6) to select and appoint all civil, church and military officials; and (7) to confer decorations for distinguished services.

The King is nominally Commander-in-Chief of Norway's armed forces, which may not be increased or decreased without the consent of Parliament. The King is authorized to assemble troops, to start war in defense of the country, to conclude peace, to make and denounce treaties, as well as to send and to receive diplomatic envoys. In certain cases, and always in connection with important treaties, the consent of Parliament is required.

In exceptional circumstances, the King may summon Parliament for an extraordinary session, which can be dismissed whenever he sees fit to do so. If the King assents to a bill passed by Parliament, it becomes law. The King has the right of suspensive veto, but this privilege is not exercised nowadays.

The original requirement that "All resolutions made by the King shall, in order to become valid, be countersigned" by the Prime Minister or his deputy, has been altered in the course of years. The aim of this provision was to hold the Cabinet responsible for the formal aspects of a resolution, but not its content. After the introduction of Parliamentarism in 1884, however, the Cabinet took the position that it had the right and duty to refuse to countersign any Royal resolution that failed to meet with its approval. This interpretation was first tested in 1893 and, subsequently, in 1905, when the Norwegian ministers in Stockholm declined to countersign the Swedish-Norwegian King's veto of a law duly passed by Parliament, an event which led to dissolution of the union with Sweden.

Despite the diminution of Royal power, however, the experiences of World War II and the post-war years have clearly shown that the King of Norway is more than a mere figurehead. By maintaining strict neutrality in politics and the affairs of state, the King has become a symbol of national unity and the authority of the State.

Parliament

The enactment of legislation is the most important function of Parliament. Since 1884, Parliament has also been given the de facto right to approve any Cabinet appointed by the King to exercise his executive authority. By its power to pass on economic and financial measures, and in other ways, too, Parliament can directly intervene in the management of the State.

According to the original system, the number of representatives varied, in proportion to the number of voters, between 75 and 100. By 1859, the number had increased to 117, but was then fixed at 111. Subsequently, it was changed several times. In 1919, Parliament decided to increase its membership to 150. Since then there has been no further change.

To run for Parliament a candidate has to meet three requirements. He must have reached the voting age of 21 years; he must have resided 10 years in Norway; and he must have the right to vote. Once elected, he cannot decline to accept the mandate, nor can he subsequently resign. In case of death or illness, a representative's seat is taken over by an alternate (varamann). Since 1952, a candidate may run for Parliament in any part of the country; he does not have to be a resident of the particular election district. Civil service employees working at the central government offices and employees of the Royal Court, including those who have retired on pension, are ineligible as candidates for Parliament. The same applies to officials of the Diplomatic and Consular Services.

Representatives are elected for a period of four years, all at the same time. There are no bi-elections in Norway. Parliament is formally opened on the first weekday after Jan. 10 of each year. Before World War II, each session lasted about six months. Since 1945, however, the pressure of work has usually necessitated fall sessions as well. When a representative is appointed to the Cabinet, he can no longer represent his constituency in Parliament, and his seat goes automatically to his alternate. Cabinet members are allowed to participate in the Parliament debate, but cannot vote.

A member of the Norwegian Parliament receives a fixed salary of Kr. 26,000 a year, plus Kr. 20-45 for each day of the session. He is also paid for committee work between sessions, and certain additional assignments. Besides, he is entitled to free travel. In the course of each year, a representative may thus earn about Kr. 35,000, everything included. Representatives receive no allowances for clerical or other assistance. Each office is shared by two M.P.s, but chairmen of the permanent committees have their own offices. Also, every party group is allowed one paid secretary and an office. A small staff, maintained by each party group, handles correspondence and appointments for the individual members. Representatives have no franking privileges. They are immune from arrest, except for crime, and cannot be held responsible in a court of law for opinions expressed in Parliament meetings.

The Norwegian Storting may be described as a modified unicameral legislature. At the beginning of the first session following each new election, Parliament selects one-quarter (actually 38) of its members to serve in the

Parliament Building in Oslo

Lagting, while the remaining three-quarters (112) constitute the *Odelsting.* These assignments last throughout the four-year period. The division of Parliament into the *Lagting* and the *Odelsting* is done for two reasons, first, to assure bi-cameral consideration of all legislative matters; second, to consider the impeachment of a member of the Cabinet, the Parliament or the Supreme Court. In the latter case, the *Odelsting* acts as the prosecuting authority and the *Lagting* sits with the Supreme Court as judicial authority (Riksrett).

All legislative proposals which affect the citizen's rights and duties and his relationship to the State are considered separately by both divisions of Parliament, while resolutions relating to Constitutional amendments, treaties, budgetary and financial matters, such as appropriations, taxes and loans, organizational and political questions, etc., are dealth with in plenary session.

Any citizen may submit petitions, suggestions and addresses to Parliament. Legislative proposals can be introduced only by the Cabinet or representatives assigned to the *Odelsting.* Resolutions, however, can be introduced by any member of the Parliament or the Cabinet. Most of the resolutions and legislative proposals are submitted by the Cabinet in the form of a government-sponsored bill, called a Royal proposition.

The main work is done in the 14 standing committees. Twelve of these are selected from either Parliament division, while the other two are open to members of *Odelsting* only. Each representative may serve on no more than one committee. Composition of the committees is entrusted to the 37 member Election Committee, which is chosen in proportion to party representation. Unlike the practice in the U. S. Congress, the length of a representative's service in Parliament has but little bearing on his appointment to, or his rank in, a committee. The chairman of a standing committee is authorized to call meetings and can use his vote to break deadlocks. Aside from this, he has none of the powers entrusted to the chairman of a U. S. Congressional committee.

One of the two standing committees composed of *Odelsting* members only is the Protocol Committee (10 members), which reviews the records and actions of the Government. Any matter indicating violation of legal authority is referred to the *Odelsting* for further examination or institution of impeachment proceedings. Members of the Protocol Committee also ordinarily constitute the Committee on Secret Protocols, headed by a different chairman, which examines treaties and agreements entered into by the Cabinet.

The chairmen of the 14 standing committees assist the Presidium in supervising and coordinating the work program of the Parliament and its two divisions. Comprising the president and the vice-president of the Parliament, as well as the presidents and vice-presidents of the *Odelsting* and the *Lagting,* the Presidium exercises considerable control over the referral of proposals to committees and the introduction of committee recommendations.

When a legislative proposal has been approved by the *Odelsting* and the *Lagting,* or the Parliament in plenary session, it becomes law. Constitutional amendments must be passed by a two-thirds majority. A proposed amendment must be submitted to the first, second or third Parliament session, following a general election. But its adoption or rejection is left to the first, second or third session following the next general election. No amendment may contradict the principles embodied in the Constitution.

The King cannot dissolve Parliament and set the date for a new election. Nor can he call for a plebiscite. When a Cabinet fails to obtain a vote of confidence in Parliament, it must resign. The King then usually invites the chairman of the largest party group in Parliament to form a new Cabinet. If he is unsuccessful, the King turns to the chairman of the second largest party group, and so on, until he finds a party or a combination of parties assured of a majority in Parliament.

Judicial System

From the earliest times, Norway has been a state based on law. The fundamental precept was laid down in the ancient Frostathing law in these words: "With law the land shall be built, not by lawlessness laid waste."

At the apex of the Norwegian judicial system is the Supreme Court, below which there are several lower tribunals dealing with civil and criminal cases. At the local level, county and town councils elect a 3-member Conciliation Council (Forliksraad) which endeavors to mediate between parties to a civil suit. If mediation fails, the Conciliation Council may act as a court of justice within the limited competence vested in it by the law. Cases which cannot be decided by the Conciliation Council are referred to a County and Town Court (Herreds-og Byrett), which also acts as court of appeal for judgments handed down by the Conciliation Councils. The County or Town Court Judge (sorenskriver and byfogd, respectively) is a professional judge. He is appointed by the Government and can not be removed, except by court action. The judge may decide a minor case alone or with the assistance of two laymen chosen by ballot for the particular case. In particularly difficult or important cases, the court may be composed of three professional judges, if so requested by one of the parties to the dispute. A County or Town Court Judge also handles criminal and inheritance cases, and bankruptcies, besides acting as notary public and registrar for real estate deeds.

On certain conditions, laid down in the law, County or Town Court decisions or judgments may be brought before the Court of Appeal (Lagmannsrett), whose rulings, in turn, may be appealed to the Supreme Court. The right to appeal to a higher court is, as a rule, dependent upon the economic value involved in a case. Since 1936, five Courts of Appeal have been in operation in various parts of Norway. Each case is tried by three professional judges, but two to four laymen may be asked to take part in the hearing and decision, if so requested by one of the litigants. The Court of Appeal also deals with criminal cases. Court proceedings are oral, and all evidence must be submitted directly to the court.

The power to institute criminal proceedings is vested in the Public Prosecuting Authority (Paatalemyndigheten), whose organs are the Commissioners of Police (Politimestrene), the State Attorneys (Statsadvokatene), and the Director of Public Prosecution (Riksadvokaten). The usual forms of punishment are fines and imprisonment. After sentence has been passed, the criminal may be pardoned by the King in Council, meaning the Cabinet, normally on recommendation from the Ministry of Justice. The pardon may be complete or partial. In peacetime, there is no capital punishment.

Criminal proceedings are usually instituted before the Examining and Summary Courts (Forhörsretten), whose main objective is to obtain valid evidence that will help to decide whether a person accused or suspected of an alleged crime should be committed to trial. If the accused pleads guilty, the examining judge, who is always the County or Town Judge, may summarily pronounce sentence. Should the case be referred or appealed to the County or Town Court, it is tried by the Judge with the assistance of two laymen.

County and Town Courts may try all criminal cases, provided the maximum sentence applicable to the offense in question does not call for more than 5 years in jail. If the maximum sentence exceeds this limit, the case goes before the Court of Appeal (Lagmannsretten), which then acts as a court of primary instance. Subject to permission from the Judicial Committee of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals also acts as an appeal court proper for cases which have been tried by the County or Town Courts. When acting as a trial court in criminal cases, the three professional judges are assisted by a jury of ten men and women. The jury decides whether the accused is guilty or not, but does not take part in the decision of the court. A verdict of "guilty" must be carried by more than six members of the jury. The accused must be acquitted if four or more find him "not guilty." Cases involving treason, war crimes, and certain violations of government regulations, are tried without a jury by three professional judges and four laymen. In these cases, a verdict of "guilty" must be carried by at least five votes.

The Supreme Court, which has its seat in Oslo, deals with both civil and criminal cases in the last instance. Its decisions and judgments are final. Cases are pleaded by attorneys. Witnesses and litigants are not called on to appear in person; their statements are presented in the form of affidavits. In criminal cases, an appeal to the Supreme Court must be based on questions of legal interpretation or procedure, not on allegations that the evidence has been wrongly evaluated by a lower court. Decisions of the lower court may be reversed or voided by the Supreme Court, if it finds that the law has been wrongly applied, or that there has been a procedural error. The Supreme Court also has the power to change the sentence imposed by the lower court.

There are at present 18 Justices of the Supreme Court, including the Chief Justice. Each case is tried by a panel of five Justices, with the senior Justice acting as chairman. If three or more hold that the case at hand deviates from precedence, or consider that a provision laid down in a law, an Act of Parliament, or a provisional Cabinet decree, has been erroneously applied, then all of the Supreme Court Justices must participate in the hearing and decision of that particular question. The same applies to other doubtful cases, if so decided by the Supreme Court.

To practice law before a Norwegian court a person must be licensed by the Ministry of Justice. License is granted only to graduates of the Law School of Oslo University. After practicing for two years, a lawyer may be granted permission to plead cases before the Courts of Appeal. At least three trial appearances before the Supreme Court are required before an attorney receives the privilege of pleading cases before that tribunal. On the basis of these appearances, the Court will decide whether or not the lawyer should be granted the title of Supreme Court Attorney (Höyesterettsadvokat).

Central and Local Administration

The administrative functions of the central government have since 1814 been divided among various departments, each headed by a Minister. There are presently fourteen departments, all located in Oslo, covering (1) Foreign Affairs; (2) Church and Education; (3) Justice and Police; (4) Municipal and Labor Affairs; (5) Social Affairs; (6) Industry and Handicraft; (7) Fisheries; (8) Agriculture; (9) Communications; (10) Finance and Customs; (11) Commerce and Shipping; (12) Defense; (13) Wages and Prices, and (14) Family and Consumer Affairs. Some of the ministers are assisted by a politically appointed State Secretary. Aside from the Ministers and the State Secretaries, all government officials are career civil servants.

A Norwegian government department is organized into several functional divisions, each headed by a Director (ekspedisjonssjef). The division's main functions are divided among several sections (kontorer), each headed by a Chief of Section (byraasjef).

Besides a large number of quasi-independent government agencies, such as Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation and the Central Bureau of Statistics, there are also several independent State organizations. The most important is the Bank of Norway. Established in 1816, this is the central agency for the direction and control of banking activities. Responsibility is vested in a 15-man Policy Committee, elected by Parliament for six-year terms. The daily operations are entrusted to a 5-member board, named by the Policy Committee. The chairman, who functions as Governor, and the Vice-Chairman, are appointed by the Cabinet, upon recommendation from the Policy Committee. Operating subsidiaries throughout the country, the Bank of Norway enjoys the exclusive right to issue notes and coins.

Quasi-independent State banks and credit institutions include the National Mortgage Bank (Kongeriket Norges Hypotekbank), the State Housing Bank (Statens Husbank), the Postal Savings Bank (Postsparebanken), the Smallholding and Building Bank (Norges Smaabruk-og Bustadbank), the Industrial Bank (Industribanken), and the Fisheries Bank (Statens Fiskarbank). These are independent as far as management is concerned, but their financial operations are subject to examination by the State Board of Auditors (Riksrevisjonen), and money for their refinancing needs is appropriated by Parliament.

Over the years, Parliament has established a number of independently operated State corporations, such as the Iron and Steel Rolling Works, Aardal and Sunndal Aluminum Works, the State Mining Corporation, the State Grain Corporation, and the State Wine and Liquor Monopoly. These, too, must in part rely on Parliament for their financing.

The management of municipal affairs is based on the principles of local government, originally introduced, in 1837, by the Act on Urban and Rural District Councils. Each of the 20 provinces (fylker), is now headed by a Cabinet-appointed governor (fylkesmann). There are 680 rural municipalities and 64 urban municipalities. The latter comprise two chartered cities, Oslo and Bergen, each constituting a province. Under a new act, effective July 1, 1955, certain legal differences between rural and urban municipalities have been removed or modified. Generally, the new act tends to give the municipal councils greater powers than previously provided.

Local governments engage in many activities, covering social and cultural affairs, public development and municipal services. They handle the administration of Old Age pensions, Health and Unemployment insurance, Children's allowances, pension, hospitals, and schools. Public safety, however, is administered by the national police, under the Department of Justice and Police.

Under the law, each municipality is a publicly constituted community, with its own institutions and administrative organs, operating under the supervision of the Department of Municipal and Labor Affairs. The extensive powers of local self-government are all conferred by the Parliament.

The territorial limits of each municipality are fixed and permanent and generally cannot be changed except by consent of the Cabinet, or the Parliament. Municipal elections, based on proportional representation, are held every four years. To vote or to run for office in a local election, a person must be 21 years of age, have resided 5 years in the country and in the election district since Dec. 31 of the preceding year. To exercise his franchise, a voter must be properly listed in the local census register.

Each rural municipality consists of one or more of the 1,029 parishes (sogn) found throughout the country. The chairmen of all district councils within a province (fylke) meet annually to form a provincial council (fylkesting), which deals with matters of common concern. The Council elects its own chairman and appoints committees. The 4-member executive committee (fylkesutvalg), whose meetings are chaired by the provincial Governor, (fylkesmann) provides a continuing administration of provincial affairs. Its principal function is to equalize municipal taxation, in both rural and urban municipalities. All appropriations or loans for more than a five-year period must be approved by both the Governor and the Cabinet.

The structure of local government in urban and rural municipalities is basically the same. A city or town council, having 20 to 84 members, elects a chairman (ordförer) whose functions in most cases are virtually the same as those of a mayor. Every decision of the Council must be signed by the chairman, and no public funds may be spent without his approval. The Council elects one-quarter of its membership to the executive committee, (formannskapet) which supervises the operations of the city administration. In the larger municipalities, the chairman of the council is assisted by one or more commissioners (raadmenn). The latter are appointed by the City Council for indefinite terms.

Election System

Norway is divided into 20 Parliamentary election districts, each comprising a province (fylke), together with its towns. The two largest cities, Oslo and Bergen, constituting separate election districts, have their own representatives in Parliament, whereas all other towns elect theirs jointly with the province in which they are located. Each province elects a fixed number of representatives, under supervision of a District Election Control Committee comprising delegates from all parties. The number of representatives elected by a district varies from 4 to 13.

Originally, the franchise was limited to certain social groups. Universal suffrage for men was introduced in 1898 and in 1913, the same right was extended to women.

Under the Norwegian election system, citizens, men and women, are entitled to vote, provided they are 21 years of age, have lived in the country for 5 years, and maintain residence there. Eligible voters who plan to be abroad on election day may cast their ballot before leaving the country, or at Norwegian Embassies, Legations or Consulates abroad. Special absentee voting provisions enable seamen in the Norwegian merchant marine and members of the diplomatic and consular services to exercise the franchise.

Nominations for Parliament are generally made at district party conventions. Candidates may also be nominated by independent groups of not less than fifty eligible voters in the rural districts or one hundred in urban areas. The voter may change the position that a candidate occupies on the ballot, or write in the name of a person not appearing on the list of party candidates. Such substitutions, relatively rare in Parliament elections, are practiced fairly often in municipal elections. The majority of voters accept the candidates nominated by the party conventions.

Voting takes place simultaneously in all constituencies. Each vote is recorded in writing by secret ballot; no voting machines are used in Norway. After the votes are counted, under supervision of the District Election Control Committee, the mandates are distributed among the various political parties according to the system of proportional representation. Since 1952, mandates have been alloted on the basis of the so-called Lague method, generally conceded to be more equitable than any previous system. Those not elected on a party list, called alternates (varamenn), automatically move up, in due order, in case of the death or sickness of a representative. Thus, the Parliament has at all times a full membership.

A rather high percentage of the eligible voters take part in the Norwegian Parliamentary elections. In 1957, for example, 1,800,155 of the 2,298,376 eligible voters went to the polls, making an overall participation of 78.3%.

Political Parties

There were no political parties in Norway when the Constitution of 1814 was adopted. Gradually, the ideological differences were crystalized in the Conservative (Höyre) and the Liberal (Venstre) parties, both of which were established as chartered political organizations in 1884. This simple party alignment endured until the turn of the century, when the Norwegian Labor Party (Arbeiderpartiet) entered the political stage, electing its first Parliament representatives in 1903. Subsequent years saw the formation of several other parties. The Center Party (Sentrumspartiet) is considered the principal organ of the farmers, although many smallholders and fishermen-farmers support other parties. The Labor Party is primarily backed by the powerful trade union movement. The Christian People's Party (Kristelig Folkeparti), dedicated to stress "Christian values," has a considerable following in the western and southern provinces. Finally, there is the small Communist Party.

The present six political parties have the following representation in the 1957-61 Parliament (with election returns in parenthesis): Labor 78 seats (865,675); Conservatives 29 seats (301,395); Liberals 15 seats (171,407); Centerites 15 seats (154,761); Christian People's Party 12 seats (183,243); and Communists 1 seat (60,060). The next Parliamentary election will be held in September 1961.

All parties, except the Communist Party, are in fundamental agreement on the objectives of Norway's foreign and defense policies. Hence, such issues as the country's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Norway's role in the United Nations have time and again received nearly unanimous support from the non-Communist parties. When it comes to domestic issues, however, there are substantial divergencies, especially with regard to economic and financial policies. But even here, the borders between the different viewpoints are diffused on many important questions. Thus, the far-reaching social reforms initiated by Conservative and Liberal governments many decades ago, and subsequently carried forward and extended by the Labor Party, are no longer subject to serious controversy. The current cleavage mainly concerns the economic and financial measures adopted by the Labor governments since World War II.

On these issues, the Parliament vote has, on the whole, followed party lines, i.e., Labor against non-Labor. Occasionally, however, the government policies have been supported by non-Labor party representatives. Despite their differing views on the extent of government controls and economic policies, all parties are in general agreement on the principles of full employment, maximum production, and equitable distribution of the national income.

The majority Labor Party, which for a brief period during the early 1920's was affiliated with the Third International, bases its program on the principles of democracy and constitutional government, and is firmly opposed to any kind of dictatorship. While the party has not formally abandoned the idea of gradually transforming Norway into a society based on democratic socialism, it attempts to solve the economic problems of the day through measures which do not greatly differ from those introduced in the United States during the past several decades.

The organizational structure of Norway's political parties is based on the local association, which nominates candidates for municipal offices, and sends delegates to the provincial and national party conventions. The provincial organization serves as liaison between the national committee and local groups. Several parties have established separate organizations for youth and women. Held every one to four years, the national convention is attended by provincial chairmen and secretaries, delegates from local, youth and women's organizations in towns and rural communities, the national committee, and the secretary-general. In addition to drafting programs and considering other policy matters, the convention elects a national chairman, a vice chairman, and a national committee.

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The bulk of party funds is derived from membership dues, donations and special assessments. Publication of annual party receipts and expenditures is not required by law, although voluntary publication is encouraged.

A striking feature of the political system in Norway is the large number of newspapers whose editorial policies are closely identified with those of the various parties. Most of the 44 Labor newspapers, including 28 dailies, are owned, operated and financed by the party. The main Labor organ, *Arbeiderbladet,* is published in Oslo. Among the 43 independent newspapers affiliated with, but not owned by the Conservative Party, are the two leading Oslo dailies, *Morgenbladet* and *Aftenposten.* The latter is the nation's largest newspaper. The Liberal Party is supported by 42 independent papers, also privately owned, of which the Oslo *Dagbladet,* and the *Bergens Tidende* are the most important. Among the other parties, the Centerites lead with a total of 24 papers, the largest of which is *Nationen,* published in Oslo. As a result of the tradition of a politically oriented press, many of the smaller towns have two to four newspapers, reflecting the views of as many different parties.

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